



Contact us:  
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**BUILDING  
SAFETY  
MONTH MAY**  
INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL



# The Department of Code Administration

# Code Connection

SPRING 2015

## Refresh Your Home for Spring!

Spring is finally here. The snow has melted and the days are getting longer, so now our homes need help recovering from the harshness of winter. As homes age, routine maintenance plays a vital role in maintaining property values. This checklist may help you with maintaining your property and create your custom honey-do list.

### **Inspect the Roof:**

The harsh winter weather has been beating on your roof all season. Invest the time to fully inspect your roof for weather-damaged shingles.

### **Clean the Gutters:**

Clogged gutters can lead to water damage.

Route water away from your structure with downspout extenders if necessary to keep your basement dry.

### **House numbers:**

Can emergency vehicles identify your home address from the street? Numbers should be a minimum height of 4 inches with a minimum width of 0.5 inch.

### **Clean and Repair Driveways, Fences, Decks, and Patios:**

Remove salt, sand, and de-icers. Repair cracks, holes, tripping hazards and gaps in walking surfaces.

### **Check Window and Door Seals:**

Extreme cold can cause weather sealants to crack

leaving these areas vulnerable to water damage.

### **Plan to Paint:**

Inspect indoor and outdoor areas for paint repair. Peeling, flaking and chipped paint is a violation of the Virginia Maintenance Code.

### **Replace Batteries In Smoke Detectors:**

Enhance the safety of your home and don't neglect this lifesaving tip!

### **Clean and Repair Windows:**

Look for window damage inside and out.

### **Chimney Care:**

Check the exterior of the chimney for damage. Hire a certified chimney sweep to clean and replace chimney caps if missing.



## Quick Tip!



Regular home maintenance enhances the property's economic age.



To report an issue in your community, please call  
703.746.HELP  
703.746.4357

## Code Inspector Tim Lawmaster, Lynhaven's Honorary Citizen Neighbor

On March 2, 2015 Maintenance Code Inspector Tim Lawmaster received the Lynhaven "Honorary Neighbor Award" for providing exemplary inspection services in the community.

Annually, the Lynhaven Citizens Association nominates and votes on a member of the staff of the City of Alexandria who goes above and beyond to help make Lynhaven a neighborhood we want to live in.



Tim Lawmaster (l) and Barbara Droughon.

Barbara Droughon President of the Lynhaven Citizens Association said "we value all that Inspector Lawmaster has done quietly behind the scenes and his quick responses to our concerns.

"Tim has always demonstrated respect for each neighbor and taken seriously any concerns brought to his attention." Even during staffing changes, weather conditions and other challenges, he always makes himself available to us. We appreciate him!

## Get Your Permit in One Day

Looking to get your project started right away? Have you heard about the Team Plan Review (TPR) process? Appointments are available each week, Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. You can have your project reviewed by all applicable departments and if everything is approved walk out with your permit.

To be eligible a project can not include any exterior or structure changes and must be located outside of the flood zone. It must fall within the following limitations:

- Business (B) occupancy under 20,000 sq. ft.
- Mercantile (M) occupancy under 7,500 sq. ft.
- Storage (S) occupancies under 15,000 sq. ft.
- Factory (F1 or F2) occupancies under 15,000 sq. ft.

If this program sounds like a good fit for you, please schedule your appointment by calling 703.746.4200. You will be asked for information regarding your project to assist with scheduling and to verify your project is eligible.





# Building Safety Month 2015

The City of Alexandria's Department of Code Administration, in partnership with VBCOA, VPMIA and the International Code Council, Held the 3rd Annual Kick-Off Event on Market Square Friday, May 1, 2015. Guest speakers included: Guy Tomberlin, ICC Board President; Sara Yerkes, Sr. Vice President of Government Relations; Sean Farrell, Virginia Building and Codes Officials Association President; Alexandria Mayor William D. Euille; and City Manager Mark Jinks. Gregg Fields, Acting Director, was the Master of Ceremonies.

For the last 35 years the 50,000 worldwide Members of the ICC have celebrated advances in constructing safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient buildings and homes. The ongoing support of Building Safety Month and the important role code officials play in public safety in the built environment comes from the President of the United States, governors, mayors, county executives and other government officials and construction industry professionals. The Building Safety Month campaign helps to improve public safety by increasing awareness about how building codes and code officials improve and protect the places where we live, learn, work, worship and play.

Other Building Safety Month 2015 events included: outreach displays throughout the month of May at the Home Depot on S. Pickett Street, Farmers Markets in Old Town, Four Mile Run and Delray. This year's theme was "Resilient Communities Start with Building Codes." Each week of Building Safety Month spotlights a specific area of building safety.



## Permit Center Announces Staffing Changes

On January 20, **Alberto Chavez** began working as a Permit Technician for the Alexandria Permit Center.

Alberto comes to Alexandria by way of Arlington County, Virginia. Welcome aboard Alberto!

On March 3, **Quenten Giles** started working for The City of Alexandria's Code Administration. Quenten has a background in Administrative Coordination and Finance Records Management. Welcome Aboard Quenten!

On March 10, **Sherita Moore** became the Code Administration's New Management Analyst. She brings experience and knowledge to our

department. Welcome aboard Sherita!

In April, **Carla Oliver** officially became an employee for The City of Alexandria. She has been an Integral part in the Code Administration progress. Welcome aboard Carla!



Sherita, Quenten, Alberto, and Carla

## Celebrating 77 Years of Dedicated Service

During the week of February 23, 2015, we celebrated the careers of two long term employees in the Department of Code Administration. Sonia Harbin and Sunila Dilawari have worked for the city for a combined 77 years of service.

Harbin started her career with the city in 1979 working for the Personnel Department. She then moved to the Fire Department who eventually merged with the Department of Building and Inspections. She has seen quite a change in her career, from a combined Fire and Building department to the re-separation of those agencies and most recently, the creation of multi-agency Permit Center. Acting Director Gregg Fields commended Harbin for her service. "Over the years, Sonia's was always concerned for her cus-



Sunila Dilawari (l) and Sonia Harbin.

tomers. She considered them family and she consistently volunteered to find needed documents or perform research in order to quickly respond to a customer inquiry. She spent the time to be sure that folks had what they needed. Her level of care and service will be missed." Harbin's career spans 35 years, the longest of any current employee within the department.

Dilawari began with the city in

1982 when the department was named the Department of Building and Mechanical Inspections. She was initially hired as a secretary. During her career, she progressed from secretary to permit technician and later promoted to her current position as a Management Analyst. In 2008, Dilawari became the first certified permit technician in the department and she worked for eight different Building Officials over her career. When asked how she felt now that retirement was near, she said, "I will miss my family within the department; I will miss the relationships here and the friends; however I look forward to retirement also." Dilawari is well recognized for her friendly and gentle personality. She always greeted you with a warm smile and a friendly hello.



# VBCOA Members Moving to Educate

In 2009 a presentation was given to the ICC Region VII code officials concerning the ICC's new High School Technical Training Program (HSTTP). Even though it was agreed the HSTTP would certainly fill a void in the pending situation all of us from code officials to contractors are aching in the near future, not enough qualified and knowledgeable tradespersons to fill the shoes of the impending retirees, not a lot happened after that first Introduction of the HSTTP.

Throughout the following years additional information was provided and slowly inquiries started to appear from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and New Jersey. The Virginia Building and Code Officials Association (VBCOA) is very pleased to say at this time that all of these states have code officials that have started a program or are working diligently to have programs started in their technical high schools and technical colleges.

In Virginia today, the VBCOA is moving forward and taking inspiring steps in the direction of having schools join our family of schools across the country teaching the codes associated with the trades. One of the first inquiries came from Randy Pearce, Building and Fire Official in the City of Emporia. Pearce arranged a meeting at the Greenville High School. Special Projects Manager, Pete Mensinger, met Pearce at the high school and spoke with the Assistant Principal, Jerry Winningham, and



With the ICC, HSTTP Liaison Jim Ellwood and the SkillsUSA, student president of the Stafford HS program & (Pete Mensinger)

carpentry instructor Mr. Wright.

After talking with Winningham, Mensinger realized that Virginia Department of Education would require VBCOA to have its program approved and added to their curriculum list before schools would institute our program into their daily curriculum. This was not a deterrent but just another education in how the system worked, so VBCOA started working on achieving curriculum approval.

Since the ICC and VBCOA have banded together to cover Virginia and spread the word about the ICC HSTTP we have seen a turnaround in participation. Over the past several months VBCOA has seen Spotsylvania School of Technology and Caroline County High School join the HSTTP. We are currently working with Stafford, Greenville and Northern Tech's to start programs. The VBCOA is asking for code officials across Virginia to lend a hand and visit their local school and talk with them about the HSTTP and encourage them to provide their students the opportunity to learn the codes associated with their trade and to earn a Certificate of Achievement from the ICC.

Code knowledge opens doors to a variety of construction related careers and as code officials we need to insure these technical high school students are aware of these careers.

For additional information contact VBCOA website at [www.vbcoa.org](http://www.vbcoa.org) or Pete Mensinger either at 703.746.4210 or 202.497.7140.



Adults pictured (Left to Right) Jim Ellwood - ICC HSTTP Liaison, Pete Mensinger - VBCOA HSTTP Chair, Spotsylvania Career & Technical Center, Masonry Instructor, and Gregg Fields, VBCOA Sergeant at Arms.

# Code Administration Quarterly Activity Report FY15

	Quarter 1 FY2015	Quarter 2 FY2015	Jan	Feb	Mar	Quarter 3 FY2015	Annual Total To Date
Total # of Permits/Licenses Issued	3,531	3,103	882	815	755	2,452	9,086
Estimated Const. Cost	221,788,486	43,066,312	8,609,595	11,801,338	21,338,910	41,749,843	306,604,641
<b>ENGINEERING REVIEWS</b>							
Take in Plan Reviews	1,120	812	310	352	421	1,083	3,015
Walk-Thru Shops	1,317	1,360	406	358	376	1,140	3,817
One Stop Shops	79	72	47	8	25	80	231
Site Plans/MPA/BAR/BZA etc.	72	75	22	10	17	49	196
Fire Protection Systems	202	193	102	75	88	265	660
<b>INSPECTIONS: NEW CONSTRUCTION</b>							
Building	3,592	3,039	1,055	976	808	2,839	9,470
Certificate of Occupancy	894	539	232	235	93	560	1,993
Demolition	25	9	7	4	1	12	46
Electrical	2,447	1,972	635	558	656	1,849	6,268
Fire Protection Systems	906	758	422	366	252	1,040	2,704
Mechanical	1,827	1,339	408	381	440	1,229	4,395
Plumbing	1,173	1,123	330	303	304	937	3,233
Sign	56	29	10	11	31	52	137
Stop Work Orders	21	18	1	6	6	13	52
Complaint Investigations	77	74	21	18	37	76	227
<b>INSPECTIONS: PROPERTY MAINTENANCE</b>							
Pro-Active	1,660	900	288	271	401	960	3,520
Complaints	675	508	145	202	246	593	1,776
Residential Rental Inspections	1	0	1	1	0	2	3
Violations Issued	1,068	254	102	59	123	284	1,606
Rodent Complaints	52	37	3	2	6	11	100
Nuisance Abatement Hotline Calls	20	7	3	4	5	12	39

## New Certifications Obtained by Code Employees

**Chris Evans**—Residential Plans Examiner; Accessibility Inspector/Plans Examiner

**Joe Blethen**—Commercial Energy Plans Examiner

**Paul Mitchell**—Commercial Plumbing Inspector; Building Maintenance Inspector; Building Maintenance Official; Amusement Device Inspector

**Dave Demaree**—ICC Fuel Gas Inspector

**Mike Christesen**—Accessibility Inspector/Plans Examiner

**Rick Stickles**—Residential Electrical In-

spector; Accessibility Inspector/Plans Examiner

**Eduardo Luna**—Residential Electrical Inspector

**Michael Johnson**—Residential Building Inspector

**Wendell Phillips**—Residential Plans Examiner

**Paul Sood**—Building Maintenance Inspector; Building Maintenance Official; Permit Technician; Commercial Energy Plans Examiner; Zoning Inspector

**James Mitchell**—Residential Energy Inspector/Plans Examiner

**Allison Cook**—Plumbing Plans Examiner Residential Energy Inspector/Plans Examiner

**Adrian Mirt**—Fire Protection Systems Plan Examiner

**Dave Vargulic**—Residential Plans Examiner

**Charles Cooper**—Accessibility Inspector/Plans Examiner

**Navdeep Kaur**—Permit Technician; Zoning Inspector

## A Letter from Retiring Director John Catlett



### As One Chapter Ends...

After a nearly 32 career, I've decided that it is time to put down the code books and pick up my new granddaughter. Yes, it's time for me to retire. I want to take this opportunity to thank you, our customers and a fantastic Code Administration staff, for the past 8 years that I have been here in Alexandria.

Our accomplishments together, as part of the safe building team, have made Alexandria a safer place. Complying with building codes is not a matter of enforcement alone. It is a combination of education, partnering early in the building design, making adjustments that meet the spirit and intent of the code, bringing communities together by maintaining our existing housing stock, and by working collaboratively towards the same objectives.

To that end, many accomplishments have been made by the Code Administration team and our partners in TES, Planning and Zoning, Finance, and Office of Historic

Alexandria. These became the major players in what is now a true, multi-agency permit center. Planning and procurement for a new land use, inspection and permitting system with greater capacity and ease of use is well underway. Training and certification by the Code Administration team has been phenomenal with new career ladders in place to encourage and reward the hard work necessary to accomplish multiple certification disciplines.

There are so many things that could be mentioned...

### A New Chapter Begins...

The Code Administration team is well prepared for the future. The Senior Management Team has not only focused on developing their building code and management skills, but has focused on building leadership at all levels of the organization. Customer service is a major focus for all of the Code Administration team. This commitment and dedication will continue to make Alexandria a great place to live, work, play, visit and conduct business in.

Albert Pike was an American attorney, Confederate officer, writer, and Freemason. He was attributed with the following quote, "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains forever." I am confident that we have together built the framework for a strong safe building team, and that will be forever. I thank you for letting me be a part of it...

With warmest regards

*John D. Catlett*

Former Director